

## Latest blow for jailed pastor

### Abedini could face extended sentence

**TEHRAN, Iran (BP and local reports)** — Iranian authorities are threatening to extend the prison sentence of jailed U.S. pastor Saeed Abedini because he leads people to faith in Christ everywhere he is detained, Abedini's wife Naghmeh told Baptist Press.

"I don't see him [witnessing] as an act of defiance," Naghmeh Abedini said. "Knowing Saeed's heart as a pastor, he's seeing people in such a dark place... on death row for murders and rapes, and just seeing people who are in prison whose future is so dark."

"Knowing Saeed's heart, I know that his heart was to give them the hope that he's found in Christ that no one can take away, even in prison."

Saeed Abedini, a U.S. citizen of Iranian descent, was sentenced in early 2013 to eight years in prison for his involvement in Iran's house church movement. Abedini lived in Iran and was a leader of house



NAGHMEH (LEFT) AND SAEED ABEDINI

churches before moving to America in 2005. He was arrested almost two years ago while on a trip to build an orphanage in the city of Kashan.

Though the Iranian constitution officially recognizes Christianity as a minority religion, Christian converts from Islam have suffered brutal persecution at the hands of Muslim authorities.

Naghmeh Abedini and the couple's two young children live in Idaho. None of the three has been allowed to speak with Saeed since he was arrested,

but they have communicated through his family in Iran who are permitted to visit him in prison for 20 minutes weekly.

The American Center for Law and Justice (ACLJ), which is providing legal assistance to the Abedini family, reported May 20 that Saeed had been returned to prison after spending two months in a hospital to receive treatment for injuries inflicted by prison officials.

He was severely beaten at the hospital before being returned to prison, ACLJ reported.

Prison guards have told

"Because I want to serve God, I see all of these difficulties as golden opportunities and great doors to serve. There are empty containers who are thirsty for a taste of the Living Water and we can quench their thirst by giving them Jesus Christ."

Saeed Abedini

Abedini that they can and will increase his jail sentence unless he stops telling fellow prisoners about Jesus, Naghmeh told Baptist Press. She said some former Muslim prisoners who placed their faith in Christ through Saeed's witness have already received extended sentences.

Still, Saeed has said he feels compelled to keep sharing the Gospel. "Because I want to serve God, I see all of these difficulties as golden opportunities

see ABEDINI on p. 9

## SWBTS admits Muslim student

**FORT WORTH (BP and local reports)** — A professing Muslim

has been admitted to Southwestern Seminary's archaeology Ph.D. program, in an apparent exception to the seminary's admissions policies.



PATTERSON

Seminary President Paige Patterson told the Southern Baptist Texan on May 16 that the student, a Palestinian who became acquainted with the seminary while participating in an archaeological dig in Israel, enrolled at Southwestern last year because "he had no other options for Ph.D. work in his field" and because Patterson hoped to win him to saving faith.

The Southern Baptist Texan is the official news journal of the Southern Baptists of Texas, which was formed several years

see SWBTS on p. 9

## SBC messenger app set to make debut

**NASHVILLE (BP)** — Messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) annual meeting next week in Baltimore can stay up to date with a smartphone app that includes schedules, maps, alerts, speakers, news feeds, the Book of Reports, the Daily Bulletin, and much more.

The free app is available for iPhone, iPad, Android, and BlackBerry users and can be downloaded by searching for "SBC Annual Meetings" in the device's app store. Once the app is downloaded, it will prompt you to install the information for the 2014 annual meeting.

Developed by Core-Apps, the app will include:

■ Push alerts that give users up-to-date news, such as changes in the meeting schedule should the posted schedule change.

■ The programs for the SBC Pastors' Conference and the SBC annual meeting.

■ An alphabetized list of Pastors' Conference and SBC annual meeting speakers, including their scheduled speaking times.

■ A newsfeed of Baptist Press news stories and photos covering Crossover, the SBC annual meeting, and related meetings that take place during the week.

■ PDF versions of the Book of Reports, the Daily Bulletin, and SBC LIFE.

■ Scheduled times for seminary luncheons and other affinity groups meeting in conjunction with the SBC annual meeting.

■ Twitter stream discussions about the SBC annual meeting.

Use the hashtag #sbcm14 to join the conversation.

■ An interactive map of the exhibit hall and messenger-friendly local restaurants.

■ A list of exhibitors, including contact information for each exhibitor, and the exhibitor's floor location.

■ A list of Baltimore Association churches and church-type missions, with a map showing where each congregation is located.

■ A "friends" icon where users can keep up to date with their friends and send them notes (users are required to fill out a brief profile).

■ Downloadable copies of Meet Southern Baptists and The Southern Baptist Convention: A Closer Look, two brochures produced by the SBC Executive Committee for use in church member training classes.



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## From the editor

WILLIAM PERKINS

### Ceaseless, obsessive

America has undergone many radical changes since the installment of Barack Obama to the presidency of the United States, and the pace of those changes seems to have stepped up since his reelection. Perhaps some of the changes have been good for the country, perhaps some have not. Americans seem to be divided on that question. History will tell.

One of the most unsettling and downright bizarre changes for which the new President campaigned in the early days of his presidency was the overturning of the so-called conscience rights of medical professionals to decline to be involved in any procedure or regimen that they may personally deem unethical or immoral. Obama continues that campaign today, with his Obamacare mandates.

Those conscience rights, formally propagated during the George W. Bush administration, have been mostly used to allow nurses, medical students, and physicians to opt out of participation in abortions, but that's not all.

Likewise, pharmacists were protected if they chose not to fill prescriptions for RU-486/mifepristone, which poisons and expels babies from the bodies of their mothers, and Plan B, the eugenicist name for a drug regimen that prevents a developing human from attaching to the nourishing walls of his/her mother's womb.

There have been scattered victories for druggists who oppose these mandates. Pharmacists in Illinois scored a major legal win in a state appeals court in 2012, but for some reason the Obama administration and Congress are determined to mow down those conscience rights at the fastest possible speed.

In 2009, the Democrat-controlled U.S. Senate killed an amendment to a federal budget proposal that would have legally protected those conscience rights on the federal level. Tom Coburn, a Republican senator and physician from Oklahoma who still practices medicine in his home state, offered the amendment. (Coburn announced in January of this year that he will not be able to serve out his current term due to health reasons.)

Both Mississippi senators, Republicans Thad Cochran and Roger Wicker, voted in favor of the Coburn amendment.

In total, 51 Democrats voted no on the Coburn amendment, while three voted in favor and two did not vote. On the Republican side, 38 senators voted for the amendment and three voted against it. Two independents also voted no.

With that vote, the U.S. Congress effectively went on record as being in favor of taking away from medical professionals their right not to be involved in objectionable procedures and regimens — and you thought our politicians were in favor of "choice."

"Like many pro-life doctors, I would go to jail before being forced to perform procedures, such as abortion, that violate my deepest held convictions," Coburn said.

"Liberty of conscience is a freedom written into the very fabric of the American experience, not to mention into the virtues of a physician," C. Ben Mitchell, a consultant at the time for the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission in Nashville, told Baptist Press.

"To coerce a physician by law to take another human life by abortion, euthanasia, or at any time in between is a violation of everything sacred in medicine. Medicine is not a consumer good, and physicians are not body plumbers," Mitchell told Baptist Press. "They are professionals whose consciences have been unfettered since the Hippocratic Oath of more than 2,000 years ago."

If the Obama administration thinks they can strip physicians of their consciences without destroying the profession, they are grievously mistaken.

There is a great practical danger in taking away those conscience rights, too. The best and brightest students who have a conscience will be forced to find another career field. They simply won't want to be physicians if they are compelled to butcher human beings in the womb or put old people to sleep like dogs, beginning in medical school. They'll go into other fields of endeavor and they'll be very successful, but they won't be physicians or nurses or pharmacists. Combine this mess with the impending Obamacare mandates, and our politicians are on the verge of ruining the greatest medical system in the world.

The spiritual consequences will be even worse. For 41 years since the U.S. Supreme Court legalized abortion throughout the country for all nine months of fetal development, we have indicated to our young people that they are worth nothing to us. We are now going to compel medical professionals to reinforce that message even stronger.

How can the nation survive this obsessive, ceaseless promotion of such savagery against its most defenseless citizens?

Simply put, we can't.

## Join in prayer for unity

Prompted by an intercultural prayer meeting hosted by the North American Mission Board in November 2013, Southern Baptist leaders from around the country have called for a seven-day prayer emphasis to begin on Father's Day, June 15.

Called One in Christ, the prayer focus includes daily Scripture readings and prayer encouragements that will be sent to the smartphones of all who register at [OneFather.org](http://OneFather.org). Scripture readings include the six chapters of Ephesians and Jesus' letter to the church of Ephesus recorded in Revelation, Chapter 2.

The call to pray for unity in the church is not new. Jesus prayed for us, present-day Christians, in John 17:20 when He said, "I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world will believe that You sent Me."

The end result of our oneness or unity is that people will believe in Jesus. That alone makes it a worthy goal. Praying in one accord was the hallmark of the early church and they turned their world upside down spreading the gospel, because of their love for Jesus and each other.

The following are a few biblical prayers we can pray in agreement asking God to equip, empower, and enable us to be one with Him and one with each other. May He grant our requests.

■ From Ephesians 4:2-4: Father, please help us to walk in a manner worthy of You and Your call to us. Give us a spirit of humility, gentleness and patience that we may show tolerance for one another in love. Help us to be diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

■ From Jeremiah 32:39: O Lord, we long for You to give us one heart and one way that we may fear You always for our own good and for the good of our children after us.

■ From Psalm 86:11-12: Merciful God, we are prone to wander, so please teach us Your way, O Lord; we will walk in Your truth; unite our hearts to fear Your name and to follow You closely. We will give thanks to You, O Lord our God, with all our hearts, and will glorify Your name forever.



Guest opinion  
with Elaine Helms

■ From Colossians 3:13-15: Father, please give us a forgiving spirit to quickly forgive offenses, so that we can put on love which is the perfect bond of unity. Please let the peace of Christ rule in our hearts knowing we are called in one body. Make us thankful to You, dear Lord.

■ From Malachi 2:10: Father God, You are the Father of us all. You are the One who has created us and yet we often deal treacherously with each other bringing shame on the Name above all names. Forgive us Lord for our blindness and bring us to the end of ourselves, so that we focus on You and Your glory in the bond of peace. For Your name's sake bring a spirit of unity to the Southern Baptist Convention that will draw people to Jesus.

From John 17:22-23: Thank You, Jesus, for praying for us to receive the glory that You and our Father gave to you to make us one; that we may be perfected in unity, so that the whole world may know that God, the Father sent the Son, Jesus to demonstrate the depth of love You have for each other and for us. Your generous love is appealing; may we allow Your perfect love to flow freely through us to each other and to the world.

In celebration of the fact that we have one Father, you as an individual, your small group, or your congregation are encouraged to join thousands of Christ followers across North America on a seven-day Scripture and prayer journey through Paul's letter to the Ephesian believers beginning on Father's Day, June 15.

Helms, who served as the Southern Baptist Convention prayer coordinator at the North American Mission Board from 2000-10, is a member of One Father Prayer Fellowship in the greater Atlanta area. All Scripture quotations are NASB, unless otherwise noted. Edited for length.

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# Exhibit Hall brings SBC home to messengers

**BALTIMORE (BP)** — The Cooperative Program exhibit at the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) annual meeting in Baltimore next week will feature a diversity of speakers reflecting the multifaceted ministries Cooperative Program (CP) funds, says Ashley Clayton, SBC vice president for the Cooperative Program and stewardship development in Nashville.

"The CP platform and stage display in the Exhibit Hall is an attempt to elevate, above the floor noise all around us, the long-held SBC values of international missions, theological education, church planting, evangelism, collegiate ministry, disaster relief, church revitalization, moral advocacy and so much more," Clayton said.

Reports of other entities' and ministries' plans for the Exhibit hall during the SBC's June 10-11 annual meeting follow:

## International Mission Board

Recognizing that the Great Commission was given to each believer in Christ through the church, the IMB exhibit will help visitors find what part they and their churches can play in "One Sacred Effort" to take the Gospel to the ends of the earth. The exhibit will feature take-away cards and stickers identifying specific people groups and ministry projects that an individual or church can pray for, partner to reach and engage with the Gospel.

Each take-away card will be grouped into providing Scripture resources, meeting human needs and sharing the Gospel in the global marketplace through various careers. The exhibit also contains sections for global affinity groups, so if God is leading an individual or church to a specific area of the world, they can talk with people working in that area, find out about its people groups and explore how to commit to a particular ministry project.

In addition to the printed cards and stickers, IMB representatives will show visitors the [imb.org/one](http://imb.org/one) website, which is going live for the SBC meeting featuring the identified people groups and ministry needs. The website can be shared with fellow church members to help them find their place in God's eternal story of bringing people to Him.

## North American Mission Board

Visitors to NAMB's exhibit will meet some of the 32 Send North America city coordinators and regional mobilizers. NAMB representatives will help connect SBC attendees with resources to help them engage their entire church families in the Send North America strategy.

Attendees will learn more about the 2015 Send North American Conference and the Send North America Experience Tour. The conference and tour will provide pastors with venues in which they can help their congregations better understand how God is moving in North America and how they can join what He is doing through Send North America.

NAMB leaders also will participate in a variety of question-and-answer sessions sponsored by the SBC Executive Committee at the Cooperative Program exhibit.

## LifeWay Christian Resources

LifeWay's popular 8,000-square-foot Christian store will offer a wide selec-

tion of books, Bibles and other Christian products. Other LifeWay areas will present interactive displays highlighting research initiatives, church resources, conference centers and direct sales as well as the B&H Publishing Group.

Among the features at the LifeWay exhibit:

■ LifeWay Research's interactive 9-foot robot, popular at last year's SBC, will focus on the theme "Transformation," drawing attention to its Transformational Discipleship research.

■ Ministry experts from the church resources division will introduce the expanded Explore the Bible small group curriculum, the only book-by-book curriculum for all ages.

■ A special story time for kids will be held daily at 2 p.m. in the B&H Publishing Group area featuring noted children's authors reading their books. Veggie Tales characters Bob and Larry will appear each afternoon at 2:15 in the LifeWay store.

■ Book signings are scheduled in the LifeWay store throughout the convention by numerous authors such as Ben Carson, David Platt, Gary Chapman, Tom Eliff, and Jerry Vines.

■ Exhibits featuring LifeWay "One-Source" endorsed products and providers will inform individuals and churches of discount purchasing options for items such as church buses and furniture, copiers, office supplies and background checks.

## GuideStone

GuideStone's Wellness Center once again will offer free health checks valued at \$150, allowing messengers and family members to have their blood pressure, cholesterol and glucose measured.

In the main booth, GuideStone representatives will offer reviews of participants' retirement accounts and answer questions about GuideStone's life and health plans, property and casualty coverage, and other GuideStone services. Churches will be able to order materials for Mission: Dignity Sunday, highlighting GuideStone's ministry to needy retired ministers and their widows.

GuideStone will offer several breakout sessions, including "Doctrines of Faith: Taking a proactive approach to our changing culture," in which a panel will discuss real-life situations churches need to know about for managing possible liability and risks. A free breakfast is included in this session at 8 a.m. Tuesday and 7:30 a.m. Wednesday; advanced registration is required at [GuideStone.org/SBC14](http://GuideStone.org/SBC14).

GuideStone's Compensation Planning course will be offered at 9 a.m. on Tuesday and its Retirement Income Solutions seminar at 1 p.m. on Monday and 2 p.m. on Tuesday. Advanced registration is recommended for the compensation and retirement income meetings, also at [GuideStone.org/SBC14](http://GuideStone.org/SBC14).

GuideStone also will make available a free copy of Nelson's Annual Preacher's Sourcebook (Volume 2), edited by GuideStone President O.S. Hawkins, to pastors/preachers. Quantities are limited.

## Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission

Questions and Ethics, a free book by



**LET'S TALK** — The Cooperative Program stage in the exhibit hall at the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) annual meeting has become a place of substantive discussion about the SBC, its ministries, and its future. Among last year's panel discussions in Houston, Frank Page, president of the SBC Executive Committee in Nashville, spoke with members of a Calvinism advisory committee. (BP photo)

ERLC President Russell D. Moore, will be distributed at the entity's booth in the Exhibit Hall.

Just days before the Supreme Court rules on the historic religious liberty case involving Hobby Lobby, join the ERLC for Hobby Lobby and the Future of Religious Liberty, a panel discussion featuring Moore, Rick Warren, David Platt, and Sam Rodriguez, at 9 p.m. Monday, June 9, in the Baltimore Hilton's Holiday Ballroom 4/5 & Corridor on Level 2.

Slated Tuesday: Questions & Ethics Live, with Moore and Matt Chandler at 5 p.m. fielding key theology, ministry and cultural questions in the Baltimore Hilton in the Holiday Ballroom 1/2/3 on Level 2. Space is limited for both events; go to [erlc.com/sbc](http://erlc.com/sbc) to register.

## Woman's Missionary Union

Missions for Life, WMU's tag line, will be the backdrop for learning about missions involvement opportunities for preschoolers, children, youth and adults at their exhibit. A special focus for Woman's Missionary Union in Baltimore is the conclusion of a yearlong celebration of its 125th anniversary.

Churches are being encouraged to start new organizations through the 1-2-5 Challenge (begin one new organization, with two new leaders and five new members). Adjoining the WMU booth will be New Hope Publishers and WorldCrafts; all three divisions will conduct daily giveaways from their booths.

New Hope Publishers is partnering with WMU to tell the story of radical commitment to God's mission and will feature the new 2014-15 WMU emphasis book by national WMU President Debby Akerman, *Secrets to Surrender: Living Wholeheartedly*. New Hope also is featuring the work of several SBC leaders including Taylor Field of Graffiti Ministries in New York City. Taylor will sign his books at the LifeWay store in the Exhibit Hall.

WorldCrafts, a fair-trade division of WMU, develops sustainable businesses among impoverished people around

the world. A member of the Fair Trade Federation, WorldCrafts partners with dozens of artisan groups to import and sell hundreds of handcrafted items from more than 25 countries. Many of the artisan groups WorldCrafts partners with are working to free women from human exploitation and sex trafficking.

## Baptist Global Response

"Immersed in their stories" will be the focus of the Baptist Global Response exhibit at this year's annual meeting. Visitors to the booth will get involved in the stories of five people who have been helped by Southern Baptist human needs work through BGR. The stories will focus on projects related to disaster relief/food distribution, rescue of young girls from trafficking, micro enterprise for refugees, livestock, and clean water.

"BGR is all about connecting people in need with people who care. BGR helps bring hope both physically and spiritually to those who are hurting, homeless and hopeless," said Jeff Palmer, BGR executive director. "BGR has almost 400 projects in over 50 countries each year that help people with the basics of life such as food, water and shelter. Come and discover ways you can get involved in these stories and hundreds of others just like them."

The exhibit's theme coordinates with BGR's current annual report and prayer guide, both of which focus on stories of real people helped by Southern Baptist human needs work. Both are available at [www.gobgr.org](http://www.gobgr.org).

## Southern Baptist Foundation

Planning for eternity will be the focus of the Southern Baptist Foundation's booth showcasing resources and services to facilitate giving, glorifying God and advancing His Kingdom. The foundation assists believers in quality estate planning as an act of stewardship and generosity. The foundation also provides prudent, socially screened investment services to churches and entities.

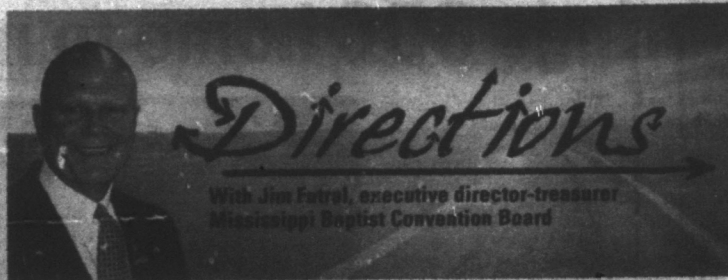


Over the past few months I have met several couples who had found a companion with whom they wanted to share the journey of life. Two of the couples had met, dated and married. They had found each other through social media connections. That has always been an interesting if not a shocking revelation to me as people go online to a dating service or some of the highly advertised Christian connections. In talking with the couples it has been interesting to hear them tell how happy they are, how compatible the relationship seems to be, and how thankful they are that they were able to find each other. For many of us, it is a new and novel way to find someone, but if the stats are true, millions of people are searching to find that right person by means of the Internet. Though I have heard some horror stories about some of the connections, it is certainly interesting to hear of the positive and good ones.

Even more fascinating to me was a couple that I recently met at a church who had met, I suppose, the old fashioned way. I was to preach at this church and was just visiting with the few early worshippers who had come into the sanctuary. There I met this delightful older couple. My guess was that they were in their 80s and there they sat close together, enjoying one another's company, and waiting for church to begin.

I introduced myself and told them that I was the guest speaker that day. They introduced themselves to me and since they had different last names, the lady went on to explain to me that they were friends. I said, "That is wonderful." Then she began to explain how they met. Both of them had experienced the death of their mate and each of them had decided that they would sell their home and move into an assisted living facility. It was there that they first met.

The man explained to me that both of them had been seeing some other people but were not inclined to continue those relationships because they were not, as he recalled, pleasant experiences. Then they met each other. She wanted me to know how that took place. She said



## In Search of a Companion

that both of them had prayed and asked God to give them someone with whom they could share the experiences of life. I asked her if they went on one of the online dating services and she said, "Oh, no!" He shook his head negatively. She said, "We just prayed about it and God brought us to each other." I said, "That is a beautiful story and I appreciate you sharing that with me." She still was not through with her explanation and continued, "I was very specific in telling the Lord what I would like to have in a man." I said, "Really! What did you tell him?" She said, "I had three things that were really important to me. One was that I wanted a Christian man. A man that I could go to church with, that had the same values that I did, and a man that knew the Lord."

I said, "That is a significant thing and probably is a feature many a single looking for someone leaves out of the equation. Yet it is the foundational truth if you want to share a life together." She was not through. She said, "The second thing that I told the Lord was that I wanted a sweet man. I did not want to spend my time around an old, grumpy man who did not have a sweet disposition." She glanced over at him and said, "He is a sweet man." He smiled from ear to ear and exuded his sweet countenance.

I said, "That is a feature that is miss-

ing in a lot of people, both young and old." She said, "Oh, I know." But then her third qualification was the most fascinating to me. She said, "I told the Lord I wanted a man who is a little bit fleshy. I like a man with some skin on his bones." I looked over at him and with a twinkle in his eye he smiled and seemed to be saying, "I am glad I am little bit overweight." We visited a little while longer as they were not sure if they were going to get married or not but were rejoicing in the blessings that God had provided for them in each other. She told me that they went out to eat together, enjoyed going to church, movies, and other events, but most of all they just enjoyed being with each other.

I inquired, "Have you set a date?" She said, "Oh, no!" I said, "Are you looking at a date?" The sweet, old man smiled and said, "Maybe." I was blessed as I went on speaking to other people but still thinking about how special the experience was, talking to them and hearing the richness of their faith and the maturity and joy of their relationship. I thought about how special their time in life was and how special it was that God had brought them together maybe to marry and maybe not but to enjoy the delights and presence of another person in their life's journey.

A wise old sage of years gone by said, "It is far better to want something you

cannot have than to have something that you do not want." They were a happy couple. While she was telling what she would love to have in a person to share life's delights, I thought about the significance in both of their lives that prayer was at the very foundation. Wanting what God wants is far more important than wanting what we want. Our wants can get all out of kilter and He can guide us through life's strange twists and turns.

In wanting what the Lord may guide and provide, I was reminded of the very first couple that God ever brought together. In the perfect Garden of Eden He brought Adam and Eve to be united and be as one. The Scripture describes Eve as a helpmate. That word literally means a completer, someone who would enable Adam's life to be what it could not be apart from her and enabling Eve's life to be what it could not and would not be apart from him. That is God's intended plan and what He wants to provide for many a person.

I am fully aware that the Scripture points out that there are some people who God in His plan wants to remain single, but generally speaking, He has a design and a desire that life's greatest joys be shared with others and specifically and magnificently to be shared with one whose life will be encouraged and also who will be an encourager to the other. On that Sunday morning just visiting with an aging couple, I saw the wonder of that event. I saw it in their eyes and heard it in their voices and rejoiced with them.

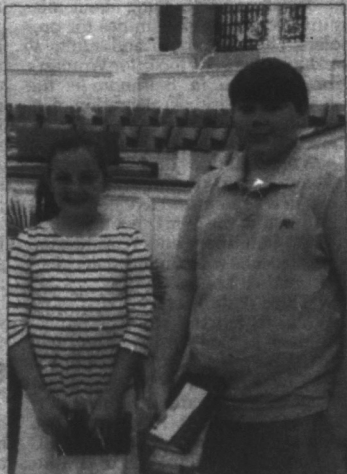
By the way, the old man with a smile on his face and a twinkle in his eye said, "One of the good things about our relationship is if we have a fuss or a fight, which we have not had, we can just walk down the hallway and go to our own rooms and not worry about it." I said, "Well, we all need a place where we can go and re-evaluate life's less than happy encounters and maybe come to a better view and attitude as time moves along."

The author can be contacted at [directions@mbcb.org](mailto:directions@mbcb.org).

## Bible Drill



**BEULAH CHURCH, DECATUR,** recognizes its youth Bible drill participant. Shown is leader Nicole Bryan and Graham Murphree.



**SHILOH CHURCH, CALHOUN COUNTY,** recognizes its two state Bible drill participants. Shown are Anna Kathryn Edgeworth and Seth Walls. Mark Longino, pastor.

**FIRST CHURCH, CALHOUN CITY,** recently honored the children and youth who participated in the local and state drills. Shown are Mikayla McCormick, Audrey Hardaway, Clay Wade, Conner Tindall, Carson Super, and James Hardaway. Mike Smith, pastor.



**FIRST CHURCH, GREENWOOD,** recognizes its state children's Bible drillers. Pictured from left are Ashlyn Gillespie, Emily Lake, Kaylee Upchurch, director Debra Miller, Andrew Upchurch, and Shane Houston Stephens.



# Another Christian mother arrested in Sudan

**JUBA, South Sudan (BP and local reports)** — A 27-year-old Christian mother on death row for alleged apostasy has given birth to a daughter while another Christian woman is jailed in Sudan on a similar charge, Morning Star News reported.

Meriam Yahia Ibrahim gave birth May 27 to daughter Maya in the Health Center Clinic of Omdurman Federal Prison for Women, according to her husband Daniel Wani, a South Sudanese-born U.S. citizen with ties to New Hampshire.

Ibrahim is in prison awaiting a sentence of 100 lashes and death by hanging for marrying a Christian and denying the Muslim faith. Born to a Muslim father and Ethiopian Orthodox mother, Ibrahim contends she was raised Christian after her Muslim father deserted the family when she was six years old.

Ibrahim also is caring for her 20-month-old son in prison and is expected to be allowed to nurse

her daughter until age two before the death sentence is carried out, according to news reports. Her husband has not been allowed to see his newborn daughter.

In a similar case, Sudanese immigration/citizenship police arrested Faiza Abdalla, 37, as she tried to obtain her national identification number April 2 at an official building in El Gadarif on Sudan's eastern border, Morning Star News reported May 27.

Abdalla, whose parents converted to evangelical Christianity before her birth and raised her in the same faith, was arrested because she has a Muslim name and professed Christianity. Her Catholic husband fled Sudan two years ago because of persecution, Morning Star News reported.

As in the case of Ibrahim, Sudanese officials terminated Abdalla's marriage and accused her of apostasy when she refused to deny Christianity.

Ibrahim's plight has been



**DANIEL WANI (LEFT) AND MERIAM IBRAHIM**

widely reported and condemned by a broad spectrum of Christians and human rights activists.

Russell D. Moore, president of the Ethics & Religious Liber-

ty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention in Nashville, has written a letter urging U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry to denounce Ibrahim's

sentence as "cruel and inhumane, to demand her release, and to use the diplomatic influence of the State Department to advocate for this most fundamental human right, the freedom of religion and belief."

In the U.S. House of Representatives, 21 Republicans and one Democrat have signed a letter urging Kerry to "condemn the ruling handed down by Sudan's court and call upon the Sudanese government to respect human rights and free Mariam Yahya Ibrahim [sic] and her young son immediately," according to news reports.

No Mississippi Congressmen were listed as signing the letter.

Senators Roy Blunt (R-Mo), and Kelly Ayotte, (R-N.H.) have signed a similar letter and also asked Kerry and U.S. President Barack President Obama to reappoint an ambassador at large for international religious freedom to monitor, prevent, and respond to such injustices.

## BIBLIOCIPHER

JXYJ JXZ WZCJPAZQ QXVKAF HZ

SZAAVTXZPGQ, YCF VS JXZ QYNZ HVFD,

YCF OYGJYMZGQ VS XPQ OGVNPQZ PC

LXGPQJ HD JXZ WVQOZA.

ZOXXZPYCQ JXGZZ: QPE

Clue: S = F

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: John 1:1

By Charles Marx, 1932-2004, © 2005

## GuideStone gains support for fight against Obama mandate

**WASHINGTON (BP)** — Three Southern Baptist entities have called on a federal appeals court to protect the religious liberty of the convention's health and financial benefits organization.

In a friend-of-the-court brief filed May 27, GuideStone Financial Resources in Dallas received support from sister entities in its challenge to the Obama administration's abortion/contraception mandate. The Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC) in Nashville, Interna-

tional Mission Board (IMB) in Richmond, Va., and Southern Baptist Seminary (SBTS) called in the brief for the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals in Denver to uphold a lower court's preliminary injunction blocking enforcement of the requirement for the time being.

GuideStone and two of the organizations that participate in its health plans filed a class-action suit against a rule issued by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) that requires employers to provide for their workers drugs and devices that potentially can cause abortions.

In their brief, the ERLC, IMB, and SBTS say the Bible and Southern Baptist doctrine teach it is a sin to support directly or indirectly the killing of an unborn child through abortion. "Accordingly, a statute or regulation requiring a Southern Baptist individual or ministry to be complicit in conduct that the Christian faith teaches is morally wrong forces that person or minis-

try into an impossible choice — to either violate conscience or violate the law — and imposes a substantial burden on the exercise of religion," the brief says.

The HHS regulation, which is part of the implementation of the 2010 health care law, requires coverage of federally approved contraceptives, including the intrauterine device (IUD) and such drugs as Plan B, the so-called "morning-after" pill. Both the IUD and morning-after pill possess post-fertilization mechanisms that potentially can cause abortions by preventing implantation of tiny embryos.

The rule also covers "ella," which in a fashion similar to the abortion drug RU 486, can even act after implantation to end the life of the child.

The brief filed by the SBC entities contends the HHS rule's imposition of "draconian fines" in reaction to actions "specifically mandated by Christian doctrine" place a substantial burden on the religious free exercise of GuideStone and the nearly 190 ministries for which it provides health benefits.

The abortion/contraception mandate violates the U.S. Constitution's First Amendment and the 1993 Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA), according to the brief. RFRA requires the government to have a compelling interest and use the narrowest means in burdening a person's religious exercise.

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## Just for the Record



Allen Stephens, Executive Director for **RANKIN COUNTY ASSOCIATION**, recently celebrated 20 years of ministry at the association. He is shown with family members Ashley, Shanda, Stephens, and wife Omega.



**FIRST CHURCH, ABERDEEN**, recently held a baby dedication service for the Chris Brown family and the Luther Bishop family. Also shown are pastors Dave Dowdy and Chris Thomas.



The children's group of **GOODWATER CHURCH, MEEHAN**, presented the spring musical play, *Herbie and the Good News Garden* May 18.



**ECRU CHURCH, ECRU**, held a baby dedication service on Mother's Day. Greg Lassetz, pastor.



**POPLAR SPRINGS CHURCH, NEWTON**, held a baby dedication Mother's Day. Shown are Kirby and Jade Bishop and daughter Isabella Grace, along with pastor James Spencer.

**GOSS CHURCH, COLUMBIA**, honored Donovan McComb on the occasion of his 10th anniversary as minister of music. Shown are McComb and pastor Mark McArthur.



**BETHEL CHURCH, BOGUE CHITTO**, recognized its graduates. Shown, front row, are Mason Williams, Anna Jo Sasser, and Carlie Kimble; back row, Jason Quin, Shana Sasser, and Lauren Sasser.



**DERMA CHURCH, DERMA**, recently licensed Brandon Lofton to the ministry. Shown are Lofton and Roger Reeder.



The RA's and GA's of **CALVARY CHURCH, VICKSBURG**, received their badges and backpacks for all the missions they participated in through the last several years.



What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the

# HOUSE TOPS.

Matthew 10:27 NAS

June 5, 2014

HouseTops is a Baptist Record supplement produced by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's Communication Services.

I WILL  
GIVE  
YOU  
A  
NEW  
HEART

EZEKIEL 11:19

PRAY FOR GOD TO RENEW OUR  
HEARTS FOR HIS MISSION.

PLAN YOUR CHURCH'S STATE  
MISSION EMPHASIS BETWEEN  
AUGUST & OCTOBER.

MARGARET LACKEY RESOURCES  
PACKETS WILL ARRIVE IN JUNE.

*Margaret Lackey*  
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[http://mbcb.org/church\\_growth/cm/allstate/dates.aspx](http://mbcb.org/church_growth/cm/allstate/dates.aspx)

-or-

call the Church Music Dept. at the MBCB at  
1-800-748-1651, ext. 267, 601-292-3267.

## HOW DO YOU SPELL RELIEF?

Busy completing over 200 jobs following tornadoes on  
April 28, 2014  
Active volunteers which numbered about 400 during this effort  
Prayer and counseling for over 100 people through Baptist  
chaplains  
Tupelo and Louisville Baptist churches fed over 1000 people  
the first week  
In-kind donations have filled ten semi-trucks; and about  
\$118,000 has been collected thus far  
State Missions Offering (Margaret Lackey) and the Cooperative  
Program help fund these ministries  
The effort continues and your donations are appreciated  
Salvation was proclaimed by 41 people! Praise be to God!

HOW DO YOU SPELL RELIEF? MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST RELIEF MINISTRY  
For more information, or to get involved in this effort, contact the MBCB Men's Ministry  
Department at (601) 292-3339, [dgarner@mbcb.org](mailto:dgarner@mbcb.org)  
YOUR COOPERATIVE PROGRAM DOLLARS AT WORK!

*Music Mississippi*

MUSIC LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE  
AUGUST 22-23, 2014  
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH  
FLORA, MS



Look for more specific details concerning Music Mississippi  
in the spring issue of UPBEAT

For more information call the Church Music Dept., 1-800-748-1651,  
ext. 267, 601-292-3267, or e-mail [palford@mbcb.org](mailto:palford@mbcb.org)



# 2014 MISSISSIPPI SUMMER MIS



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SMCC  
New Mexico



Jennie Avery  
ICC  
Oklahoma



Louryn Bairfield  
USM  
Washington



Mark Beasley  
ECCC  
Texas



Jamie Benefield  
UM  
Southeast Asia



Allison Brining  
MSU  
Texas



Ashley Bullard  
MC  
Southeast Asia



Brittney Burksen  
BMC  
Canada



Daniel Burksen  
BMC  
Florida



Lauren Calvert  
UM  
Southeast Asia



Richard Clay  
ICC  
California



Caitlin Cooksey  
WCU  
Southeast Europe



Danielle Creel  
DSU  
California



Hailey Crow  
WCU  
Oklahoma



Lauren Cullen  
MC  
Mexico



Brittany Donahue  
ICC  
California



Maddison Dosiglas  
MC  
Philippines



Destinie Duckworth  
NECC  
Philippines



Travis Dulaney  
ICC  
Ohio



Jonathan Dulin  
NWCC  
Texas



Laurel Duty  
USM  
East Asia



Grant Gilliam  
MC  
South America



Mary Katherine Good  
MC  
Alaska



Gage Gordon  
SMCC  
California



Amy Greer  
SMCC  
Ohio



Amanda Griffith  
UM  
Oklahoma



Jacob Hall  
HINDS  
Philippines



Hannah Hanberry  
NWCC  
Idaho



Rebecca Hankins  
UM  
France



Chalice Harbor  
BMC  
New York



Lindsay Hardin  
UM  
Zimbabwe



Jillian Harts  
UM  
Southeast Asia



Audam Kelsay  
NWCC  
Texas



Matthew Kelso  
NWCC  
Texas



Tyler Keys  
USM  
East Asia



Nathan Kirk  
DSU  
Kansas



Sarah Lindsay Knight  
MC  
Oklahoma



Allen Lampton  
SMCC  
Canada



Brock Langley  
JONES  
Alaska



Ross Gray Lewman  
SMCC  
Oklahoma



Hannah Locke  
ICC  
Texas



Sarah Long  
USM  
Thailand



Mindy Mathias  
MGCCC  
California



Kaylee Morgan  
UM  
Philippines



Sarah Moseley  
USM  
East Asia



Matthew Munlin  
MSU  
Canada



Natasha Murphy  
UM  
Mexico



Lauren Murray  
BMC  
Canada



Ryan Nelson  
NWCC  
Southeast Asia



Lynn Newsals  
USM  
Philippines



Jordan Parker  
MC  
Philippines



Joshua Parker  
ECCC  
Philippines



Katie Pittman  
USM  
South Asia



Kimberly Ponder  
NWCC  
California



Adam Rowis  
JONES  
Central Asia



Willa Ann Benard  
WCU  
South America



Katie Robbins  
MSU  
Philippines



Abby Rodgers  
ICC  
Maine



Matthew Romack  
SMCC  
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Payton Roney  
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UM  
Canada



Emily Vaughn  
USM  
Canada



Jamie V  
BA  
Illinois



# MISSISSIPPI BSU MISSIONARIES



Reid Bensch  
MC  
Philippines



Hagen Bray  
UM  
Philippines



Quinn Brooks  
MGCCC  
New Mexico



Jeremy Brown  
HOLMES  
Ohio



Jordan Brown  
ICC  
Maryland



Lindsey Calvert  
MC  
East Asia



Shane Chadwick  
MSU  
Florida



Chris Chatman  
JONES  
Southeast Asia



Adam Clark  
MERIDIAN  
Maryland



Aryn Clark  
UM  
South Asia



Laurel Duty  
USM  
East Asia



William Dykes  
MSU  
Eastern Europe



Abi Earnhart  
JONES  
Florida



Connor Edwards  
HOLMES  
Thailand



Ashley Felder  
USM  
Australia



Hannah Forsythe  
BMC  
Peru



Daniel Fortenberry  
HOLMES  
Thailand



Daniel Fouché  
MSU  
Philippines



Rebecca Frady  
JONES  
Texas



Brandon Ganucheau  
USM  
New Mexico



Stefanie George  
MSU  
Canada



Brian Hart  
UM  
Southeast Asia



Derek Hart  
DSU  
South Asia



Carlye Henderson  
BMC  
East Asia



Lauryn Heneghan  
USM  
South Asia



Stuart Hinton  
USM  
East Asia



Lizzie Hobbie  
SMCC  
Washington



Erin Holtfield  
WCU  
Illinois



Ethan Houser  
MSU  
Southeast Asia



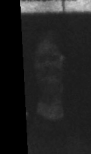
Ashton Howell  
JONES  
Canada



Andrew Irwin  
UM  
Kansas



Amber Izzard  
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Thailand



Andy Mathias  
MGCCC  
California



Beth Ann McCormick  
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Lucy Puder  
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Hannah Quarles  
MSU  
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Mallory Quinn  
WCU  
Zimbabwe



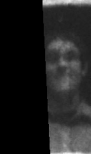
Savannah Backley  
WCU  
California



Mandi Ratnes  
UM  
California



Kristi Rolston  
MC  
Thailand



Daniel Stason  
MGCCC  
Canada



Colton Smith  
SMCC  
New Mexico



Laynia Smith  
JONES  
Ohio



Luke Smith  
MSU  
South Asia



Maura Smith  
CO-UN  
South Asia



Braddon Spearman  
MS DELTA  
Texas



Brittney Spence  
PRCC  
California



Britton Strickland  
USM  
Southeast Asia



Christian Stringer  
UM  
Florida



Austin Sylvest  
USM  
Florida



Tonya Teasley  
CO-UN  
Philippines



Jamie Wagner  
BMC  
Illinois



Bryce Warden  
UM  
Mexico



Courtney Webb  
Hinds  
Washington



Kourtney White  
DSU  
New Mexico



Whit Williams  
ICC  
Canada



Marly Wilson  
PRCC  
Texas



Garrett Windham  
MC  
South Korea



Meghan Woolworth  
BMC  
New Mexico



Kaleigh Younger  
WCU  
California



Pray this day for...

June 6 - 19, 2014

*"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another." John 13:34*

Pray for **Mark & Karen Alexander**, missionaries ministering to American Peoples.

Pray for **Arnold & Susie Austin**, missionaries ministering to American Peoples through community & church/home outreach evangelism.

Pray for **Richard & Martha Beal**, missionaries ministering to American Peoples through financial administration & church/home outreach evangelism.

Pray for **David & Laurie Bledsoe**, missionaries ministering to American Peoples through church/home outreach & evangelism.

Pray for **Kaye Brooks**, missionary ministering to American Peoples through church planting.

Pray for **Shannon & Charlie Worthy**, missionaries ministering to European Peoples.

Pray for **James & Mary Adair**, missionaries ministering to Sub-Saharan African Peoples through church planting & church/home outreach evangelism.

Pray for **Karen Brown**, missionary ministering to American Peoples through nursing.

Pray for **Matthew Burks**, missionary ministering to European Peoples through evangelism.

Pray for **David & Pamela Carlton**, missionaries ministering to Sub-Saharan African Peoples through theological education, church/home outreach evangelism.

Pray for **Rebekah Clark**, missionary ministering to European Peoples through youth evangelism.

Pray for **Richard & Wanda Clark**, missionaries ministering to European Peoples through strategy coordination.

The IMB missionaries listed in the HouseTops prayer calendar are currently active in 2-4 year terms or in career service.

## DEUTERONOMY

A CHALLENGE FOR A NEW GENERATION

**JANUARY BIBLE STUDY PREVIEW CLINIC**

**SEPTEMBER 8, 2014**

SKYROOM, 4TH FLOOR

MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION BOARD, JACKSON

REGISTRATION: 8:30 - 9 a.m.

PREVIEW STUDY: 9 a.m. - noon

Register by September 1 by contacting Carolyn Day of the Sunday School Dept.: e-mail: cday@mbcb.org; Phone: 1800-748-1651, ext. 291, or 601-292-3291 locally.



## SCHOOL PRAYERWALK

**School Prayer Walks & Teacher Appreciation Days**  
Anytime in **AUGUST**

Pray for our students, teachers, & administrators. Pray that the Glory of the Lord will fill the offices, classrooms, halls and athletic fields of our Mississippi schools, especially our colleges and universities! Suggested resources to help you plan may be found here: [www.mbc.org/wmu](http://www.mbc.org/wmu)

> Prayer (prayer walk guides, plus links to NAMB and IMB prayer sites)  
<http://www.wmstore.com/product.asp?sku=E114110>  
(download guide for prayer walks)

[www.pinterest.com/volunteerspot](http://www.pinterest.com/volunteerspot) (teacher appreciation ideas)

Contact Tammy Anderson of the MS WMU for advice: 601-292-3323 or [tanderson@mbcb.org](mailto:tanderson@mbcb.org)

8/10/07

Mr. Evan Epps  
Parents: Aaron & Tiffany  
American Peoples

8/26/08

Mr. J.S.  
Parents: S. & M.  
Last Frontier

8/9/03

Mr. J.Y.  
Parents: T & J  
RESTRICTED

8/27/00

Mr. Benton Hewitt, III  
Parents: Earl & Ramona  
West Africa

8/16/07

Mr. Hutchinson Adair  
Parents: James & Mary Margaret  
Sub-Saharan African Peoples

8/20/10

Mr. Micah  
Parents: Jason & Courtney  
RESTRICTED

8/24/01

Miss Kaylee Hodgins  
Parents: Ray & Cindy  
Deaf Peoples Group



### Encourage an MK with a card!

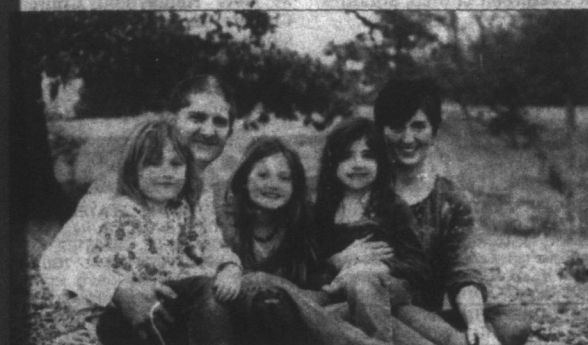
FOR SECURITY, cards will be forwarded. Please send all to: MBCB WMU MK Birthdays, PO Box 530, Jackson MS 39205.  
**PLEASE NOTE:** Church members may send a package of cards together; cards do not have to be sent individually to the WMU. Individual cards do not need postage stamps when sent as a package to MS WMU.  
Please be sure your cards arrive in WMU prior to the first date on this birthday list.



# HOUSE TOPS



## Just for the Record



Joel and Heather Strahan with daughters Ryan, Ellie and Josie left for the mission field April 10. They will be in Moscow, Russia for two years studying the language. Joel will serve as a Humanitarian Aid Consultant in Siberia. They will be working with the indigenous people in Far North Russia. Their home will be in Kamchatka, land of the Aleuts, Alyutors and other tribes. Strahan served as Ministry of Music/Education for the past year at **SLAYDEN CHURCH** (Marshall Assoc.). Heather is from Slayden and met Joel when he served previously at Slayden as Music/Youth Minister. Rusty Fair is Pastor.



**CALVARY CHURCH, BOGUE CHITTO**, recognized its high school graduates. Shown are Marcus Moak, Becca Wright, and pastor Hal Hatten.



**THAXTON CHURCH, THAXTON**, commissioned 31 missionaries May 25. These missionaries will be serving in Kenya, Arlington, Tex., and Tupelo. The church has also commissioned missionaries to serve in Cambodia, Nicaragua, and Kentucky this year. Michael Wilbanks, pastor.



**FIRST CHURCH, ABERDEEN**, honored all their ladies on Mother's Day with a multi-generational photo keepsake.

## College News



**WILLIAM CAREY UNIVERSITY** students Colton Lee of Poplarville and Alyssa Keyes of Ringgold, Ga., received the Jenkins - Chastain Citizenship Awards at WCU's 2014 Honors Convocation on April 30. The highest honor given by the university, it recognizes students who have made the most significant contributions to student and campus life in exemplifying those qualities of citizenship upheld by the university. Keyes was honored with the Student Leadership Award and the Outstanding English Major Award at Honors Day, as well.

### In other College News:

►The **Mississippi College** School of Law recognized Jim Rosenblatt for his achievements as law dean for the past 11 years. He will serve as a full-time professor starting in August. College leaders expect to announce the selection of the school's new dean in late May.

## Staff Changes



**SLAYDEN CHURCH, LAMAR**, has called Brandon Hughes as minister of music and education, effective Easter Sunday. He comes from First Church, New Albany, and is a graduate of Blue Mountain College. He is shown with his wife, Hanna. Rusty Fair, pastor.

**AllStar**  
SUNDAY SCHOOL TRAINING

SPEAKERS: JOSH HUNT & ALLAN TAYLOR

REGISTRATION OPENS @ 6 PM  
FRIDAY 7-9 PM

SATURDAY 9 AM-NOON

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**ON GUARD** — Amid razor wire and high-powered weaponry, a security officer in the city of Donetsk in Ukraine watches over government buildings recently seized by pro-Russia demonstrators. The political standoff in Ukraine between the government and rebels intent on bringing Russia to power has not yielded good results for the Christian ministries there. (BP photo courtesy of iMB)

## Workers say dark days ahead for ministry in Ukraine churches

**DONETSK, Ukraine (BP)** — In Donetsk, the city in eastern Ukraine where Tom Long (not his real name) resides, life is "fairly calm" — except that people are carrying baseball bats and packing semi-automatic rifles.

Long is on his way out. "It's difficult. We don't know what the situation is like or if I'll be able to come back," said Long, an International Mission Board representative who has called the city of Donetsk home for the past four years. "It's hard. I care about the people. I have grown to love this city, and I wish I could stay."

The Donetsk area and the neighboring region of Luhansk passed referendums May 11 to withdraw from Ukraine and move toward joining the Russian Federation. The Ukrainian government in Kiev, along with the U.S. and the European Union, called the move illegal and international leaders called for Ukraine to be reunified.

Ever since Russia absorbed Crimea in March, Ukraine's "normal" is shaky in both the short and long-range forecast, Long said. No one knows what the future may hold, he said.

Donetsk's government offices are closed for now, keeping Long from renewing his residence permit and forcing him from his home indefinitely.

The crisis is also affecting day-to-day life for Ukrainian nationals, said Tim Johnson (not his real name), an iMB representative in Kiev. Bloodshed breaks out occasionally in

"shocking" ways in an otherwise calm nation, he said.

Border checks have become increasingly complicated, and Ukrainians find their wallets pummeled by a falling currency and rising prices. "This isn't Cairo, Somalia, or the West Bank," Johnson said. "We are not accustomed to this. This (kind of crisis) is new territory for us."

The financial shift caused by the crisis hurts Ukrainians at the gas pump and the grocery store, but most of all it hurts the ones with mortgages, he said. "Some purchase a home with a loan backed with (U.S.) dollars, and when their currency loses ground against the dollar, their house payment goes up."

"We know many people dealing with some form of debt like that for whom payments have suddenly just gotten really hard."

For believers, it's impacting work on the ground, too, he said. "When you lose 30% of the value of your currency, it affects your ministry."

The church in general is holding its breath to see how life may change as the crisis develops, Johnson said. In Crimea, Baptist churches are already seeing the effects of the power shift, he pointed out.

"The churches in Crimea now have to reregister and reform to meet Russian Federation criteria," Johnson said.

Crimean Baptists' relationship setup is shifting as a result, he explained. "Their historical relationships have

formerly been with the Ukrainian Baptist Union, but to comply with the laws they will have to reregister their churches and maintain an official relationship with the Russian Baptist Union, when all of their relationships are with the Ukrainian Baptist Union."

For all of the Baptist churches in Ukraine, it's a wait-and-see situation as to what the future of ministry in the region will look like, Johnson said.

For Long personally, that goes for one specific church — the one he's leaving behind in Donetsk. "There's a small church here that started about a year ago, and they still need lots of help. There's a lot of young people in the church, and I care about them greatly."

Long asked for prayer for them as well as for the people of Ukraine in general, that they would have the comfort and peace of God.

"Pray for somehow God to use this for His glory," he said. "We know He uses situations in our lives for that. I'm just praying that through this His glory would be made known to the people here." Pray:

■ That God would bring peace and comfort to the people of Ukraine.

■ That God would use the situation there for His glory in the church and among those who do not yet know Him.

■ That God would provide new opportunities for ministry in Ukraine in the midst of the crisis, as well as the means to carry out that ministry in the face of financial strain.

## Vacation Bible School

► **Evergreen Church, Shubuta:** June 23 — 27, 9 a.m. — noon.

► **North Long Beach Church, Long Beach:** June 16 — 20, 6 — 8:30 p.m. Ages kindergarten — 8th grade.

► **New Henleyfield Church, Carriere:** June 16 — 20, 8:30 — 11 a.m. Ages 3 — 6th grade.

► **Sand Hill Church, West:** June 16 — 19, 6 — 8:30 p.m., ages nursery — adults.

## MS POSITIONS

**STUDENT MINISTER - HEUCKS RETREAT BAPTIST CHURCH** of Brookhaven, MS is seeking part-time Student Minister. Send resumes to Heucks Retreat Baptist Church 2167 Heucks Retreat Rd., Brookhaven, MS 39601 or email to [kparvin@hrcbaptist.net](mailto:kparvin@hrcbaptist.net)

**PART-TIME YOUTH MINISTER NEEDED AT NEW SIGHT BAPTIST.** Please send resumes to: Youth Minister Search Committee, 629 Forest Trail, Brookhaven, MS 39601.

**FAIRFIELD BAPTIST CHURCH IN MOSELLE, MS IS LOOKING FOR A PART-TIME YOUTH MINISTER.** Send resume to 942 Moselle Seminary Rd, Moselle, MS 39459 or email to [fairfield@bayspringstet.net](mailto:fairfield@bayspringstet.net)

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## ABEDINI

cont. from p. 1

and great doors to serve," he wrote in a letter from prison last year. "There are empty containers who are thirsty for a taste of the Living Water and we can quench their thirst by giving them Jesus Christ."

Shortly after Abedini was sentenced, his wife began receiving calls from women in Iran who said their husbands shared a cell with Saeed and had become strangely calm, happy, and joyful. Their husbands told the women during family visits at the prison that it wasn't safe to explain the reason for their transformation, but they recommended their wives call Naghmeh.

"Early on in his imprisonment I got to talk to some of these wives and lead them to Christ because of the change they've seen in their husbands," Naghmeh said, "and I told them, 'I think Saeed has given your husband all he has, and all he has is the hope he has found in Jesus Christ.'"

One prisoner who began following Jesus told his wife, "I don't feel like I'm in a prison anymore. I've been set free," Naghmeh said.

Saeed wants to be in America with his family and gets emotional when he sees pictures of his children's birthday parties, Naghmeh said, but he wants to share Jesus more than he wants to be free.

"He got saved from such a dark [past]," Naghmeh said of her husband, a former Muslim. "At his conversion Jesus saved him in such a radical way that he can't deny Christ and he can't stop sharing his faith. It's in his DNA."

Saeed's legal options in Iran have been exhausted and there will not be any more opportunities to appeal his conviction, Naghmeh said, but she senses that God will intervene supernaturally and bring about Saeed's release.

"When I pray, I do feel like it will be a miracle," she said. "It will be a definite act of God to release him. [Iranian authorities] feel like Saeed has not learned his lesson. He continues to stand on his faith, which they wanted him to reject."

Naghmeh asked U.S. Christians not only to pray for Saeed, but also to send their senators and congressmen brief messages requesting help for him and other persecuted Christians around the world. Senators Rand Paul of Kentucky and Ted

Cruz of Texas are among those who have told Naghmeh that such emails spur elected officials to action.

Naghmeh has testified before Congress on her husband's behalf, spoken at the United Nations, and asked European nations to press for his release as a condition of trade agreements with Iran.

She believes countries like Germany, with whom Iran wants to trade, stand the best chance of securing Saeed's release.

"Money talks more than religion" with Iran, Naghmeh said. "Iran is at a very desperate point. They're not doing very well economically. ... This is the best time to discuss human rights issues in Saeed's case and Christian persecution with them because they want to try to work with the West."

Naghmeh said 2 Corinthians 12:9-10 has become her favorite verse, a "jewel during this time" that reminds her of God's purpose for allowing persecution.

"Trials are great opportunities for us to die to our flesh and see the power of God shine through," she said. "When a room is dark and there is a light in it, automatically people go to it, so we become witnesses for Christ."

Meanwhile another U.S. Christian, Kenneth Bae, remains imprisoned in North Korea. Bae has spent nearly two years in a labor camp and faces a 15-year sentence. He was arrested for "hostile acts" against the North Korean government while leading a tourist group, a business venture that combined his entrepreneurial spirit with his personal convictions as a Christian, according to freekenow.com.

At the National Prayer Breakfast in February, U.S. President Barack Obama called publicly for Iran to release Abedini and for North Korea to release Bae. He has not spoken on the issue since then.

"...I have made it clear to all that this was my decision. No one else should be blamed. I am answerable to the faculty, to the Board and to you for all that I do including this."

Paige Patterson  
SWBTS president

## SWBTS

cont. from p. 1

ago in opposition to the policies and practices of the Baptist General Convention of Texas. They have stated publicly that they consider themselves conservative.

Patterson has admitted three other non-Christian students to schools he led over nearly four decades, the Texan reported. All came to Christ during their tenure as students, Patterson told the Texan in a phone interview.

Patterson said he granted this most recent exception after taking counsel from other seminary administrators but that "the final decision was mine alone."

"We required that the student would agree with our moral standards while a student at Southwestern. It was no problem for him," Patterson added.

However, on the admission section of its website, the school says it "assumes the student has been identified as a prospective minister by announced intent, proven conduct in accordance with Christian standards set forth in the Bible, active church involvement, and unqualified approval from the church where they are currently members."

Among the required credentials for graduate-level courses are "a mature Christian character," "evidence a desire for Christian ministry (shown through the application process)," "a record of active church service," and "promise of continued intellectual and spiritual growth."

Also, "Applicants must demonstrate church membership

and active church involvement to apply for admission to the seminary. Active membership and involvement in a local church is also required of all students for continued enrollment," the website says.

Patterson apparently did not offer the Texan an explanation of how a practicing Muslim fits those requirements.

"...I have made it clear to all that this was my decision. No one else should be blamed. I am answerable to the faculty, to the Board and to you for all that I do including this," Patterson said in a letter to seminary trustees on May 16.

The school's trustees were not advised prior to the exception being granted. Steven James, trustee chairman and pastor of Trinity Church in Lake Charles, La., told the Texan on Monday that the trustee executive committee has a scheduled meeting in September and will "discuss this issue and will deal with it accordingly at that time."

"That is the role and responsibility of the trustees," James said. "I have a concern, obviously, about the spiritual condition of the young man in question; we don't want to do anything to jeopardize that. And then from the executive committee meeting in September we will make any adjustments that need to be made."

"If it needs to come to the full board, it will come to the full board."

James said he has not received any other information about the student's enrollment except what was contained in Patterson's letter to trustees, and has not spoken with Patterson about it.

## Submission Guidelines

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. News items and/or photographs depicting benefits and activities for secular or outside organizations will not be published.

Preferred method: news may be submitted electronically to the e-mail address below, and must be included in the message segment of an e-mail form. Secondary method: news may be typewritten or neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper and mailed. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone. Due to ever-present virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments in JPEG format are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs must be submitted electronically via e-mail, as attachments in JPEG format. Hard copy photographs mailed through the postal service will not be accepted. Photographs must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted. Photographs must depict people. No landscape, building, or object-only photographs will be printed. Photographs containing inappropriate gestures and objectionable clothing will not be published. Cell phone photographs and other low resolution items that do not reproduce well on newsprint are generally not publishable.

There is no guarantee that news items and/or photographs will be published, and unsolicited material will not be acknowledged or returned. All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date. Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. These guidelines are not meant to be exhaustive.

Submit news to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org.

## Truth is not relative.

Find it in the One who is the way, truth, and life.

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life.

From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Christ today, contact a local Southern Baptist church for spiritual guidance.



# THE VILLAGE VIEW



**Dr. Rory Lee, Executive Director**

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## GIFTS OF HONOR AND MEMORY

A portion of The Village View is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful, and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.

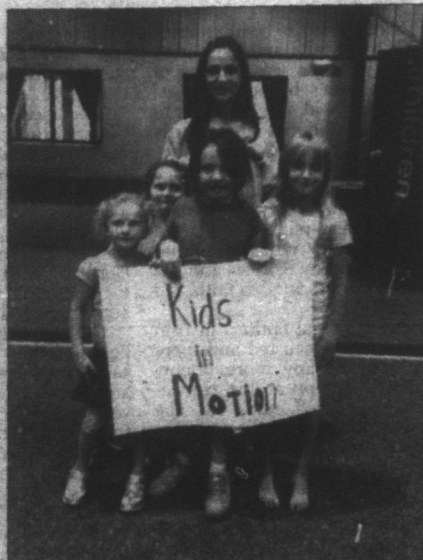
**JANUARY 2014**

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Karlanna Celeste Brumfield  
Mr. & Mrs. Jim Callender  
Mr. & Mrs. Larry R. Sasser  
Richard & Tony Rogers  
Family  
Mr. & Mrs. Jerry Sisco  
Margaret Harris Brumfield  
Mr. & Mrs. Frank O.  
Crosthwait, Jr.  
Rev. Thurman V. & Annie Grace  
Bryant  
Mr. Randy F. Rogers  
Davis Burns  
Warren & Carolyn Satterfield  
Mrs. Jo Ann Shelley Busbee  
Mr. & Mrs. Jimmy Jenkins  
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Mr. Billy Headrick  
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Mrs. Tena Haskins  
Don Gibson  
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Mrs. Dorothy Gilbert  
Dr. & Mrs. Thomas Jeffcoat  
Mrs. Glenda C. Fry

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William B. "Sonny" Gill  
Ike & Florine Collins  
Donnie & Phyllis Collins  
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Mrs. Susan Hisaw  
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Lenae Poindexter  
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Becky McAdams



Edon Baptist Church in Stringer, Mississippi, welcomed a speaker from The Baptist Children's Village to share during their missions rotation at Vacation Bible School. The children learned about the ministry, how they can serve and how to pray for the ministry. The children also collected items as a mission project throughout the week to help the ministry.

The senior adults of First Baptist Church Raleigh recently toured the India Nunnery Campus in Star, Mississippi.



Mr. Don E. Porter  
Mr. Royce McBrayer  
Mrs. Lucille H. Harris  
Edward "Hollis" McCoy  
Mrs. Billie Marie Rushing  
Mrs. Earlene McCrory  
Mr. & Mrs. Jimmy Jenkins  
Ola McElveen  
Ms. Betty J. Duncan  
Mayes McGehee  
Mr. & Mrs. Ron K. Phillips  
Alex McIlwain  
Mr. & Mrs. Hubert T. Kendrick  
Mr. James Kenneth McLendon  
Robert & Bettye Causey  
Kenneth McLendon  
Ms. Carol C. Smith  
Sherrie McIlrath  
Mr. & Mrs. Eddie Speights  
James "Jimmy" McNair

Mrs. Billie Marie Rushing  
Gerald McRaney  
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Charles T. Meacham  
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Dorris P. Miller  
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Mrs. Mildred Mitchell  
Mr. & Mrs. Ray Rounsaville  
Debbie Monk  
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Hank Mura  
Mr. & Mrs. John F. Miller  
Francis H. Myers Jr.  
Mrs. Glenda C. Fry  
Mrs. Annie Nevils  
Mrs. Helen Brown  
Dr. Paul Newman  
Ms. Mary Margaret Adams

Walter Lee & Merlaime Nichols  
Warren & Carolyn Satterfield  
Robert Pace  
Mr. & Mrs. Mike Hitt  
Mr. Jesse Palmer  
Mr. & Mrs. James E. Palmer  
The Ruth Perkins Family  
J. V. & Mary K. Parker  
Mr. & Mrs. Michael W. Parker  
Mrs. Rebecca "Becky" Peebles  
Horneshoe Bay Ladies  
Nine-Hole Golf Club  
Ms. June Snyder  
James & Patsy Wilkerson  
Mr. Walter R. Barbee  
Mrs. Bobbie Barbee  
Lloyd & Jane Eleuterius  
Mr. & Mrs. Jack Stoner  
Audrey Perkins  
Galilee FBC

Recent high school graduate, Mackenzie Ellis, is doing a health education project for The BCV to earn the Girl Scout Gold Award. Her program comes in three parts: the exercise portion, the health education portion, and the nutrition portion.... Each of these is equally important and together the components will make for a healthier Baptist Children's Village. Some of her needs to implement the project are children's Vitamins, healthy snacks (granola bars, trail mix, etc.), basketballs, playground balls, and jump ropes. These can be dropped off at Morrison Heights Baptist Church in Clinton, MS or at The BCV Headquarters in Ridgeland, MS. Please visit her web site [mackenzie7696.wix.com/bcvhealth](http://mackenzie7696.wix.com/bcvhealth) to learn more about this project.



## Crisis of Faith: When Idols Tug at Your Heart • Ezekiel 8:3b-4, 10-12; 14:1-6

"What's in your wallet?" a popular TV commercial asks about which credit card you use. While good financial management is important, it pales in comparison to the management of your heart. God wants to know, "What's in your heart?" Proverbs 4:23 reads, "Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life," (NAS).

What is in your heart today? In Luke 12:34 Jesus taught, "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also," (NAS). He knew we serve what we love.

The mighty Holy Spirit of God took Ezekiel from Babylon, where he was in exile, all the way to Jerusalem in a vision. There the Lord showed him the corruption of Judah. This vision occurred about 20 years before the actual destruction of the Temple so it was still standing and sacrifices were offered daily. Ezekiel saw people in the Temple and it was filled with idols. Though Jews were in the court in front of the Holy Temple of the One true God, they bowed towards the sun and worshiped it.

Though corrupt idol worship was continual and prevalent in Judah, life went on as usual, including the sacrificial system. Ezekiel saw in his vision

that the elders of the people even carried idols in their pockets, even when they entered into the Temple of God. They behaved as if God were completely unaware of their duplicitous attitudes and disobedience.

The Lord revealed to Ezekiel that these elders had taken idols into their hearts. Some came to the prophet to ask his advice about something, as if they were going to some other seer or one who practiced divinations condemned in the Old Testament law. God said that

His anger burned against them because they treated Him so casually, as if He were just any of the other gods.

The Lord hasn't changed and He still requires white-hot devotion from His people today. He promised the children of Israel in Ezekiel 11:19, "And I will give them one heart, and a new spirit I will put within them. I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh,"

(NAS). He still desires a pliable heart in each of us as well.

1 Corinthians 3:16 asks us, "Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?" (NAS). We often equate the Old Testament temple with the contemporary church but the New Testament equates it with the saved individual in whom dwells the Holy Spirit of God.

When believers live like unbelievers, when they tell the same jokes, view the same web-sites, engage in the

same activities, and keep silent about God's salvation, God is grieved the same as in Old Testament times. Just as God expected the nation of Israel to be different from all the other countries around them, He expects His followers now to be different from those people around them.

In the tenth chapter of Ezekiel, the glory of The Lord leaves the Temple. God had enough of Judah's unfaith-

fulness. The insincere worship and sacrifices continued in the Temple as if The Lord were still there. When we flirt with the world and then go to church as if we are sincere, we neither notice the absence of God's power, nor will we hear His convicting voice without repentance. God still expects faithfulness.

God's demand concerning our sins? Repent! Acts 3:19-20a reads, "Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of The Lord," (NAS). Even after God removed His Spirit from the Temple He still called Judah to repentance.

Ezekiel glimpsed God's majesty and glory and described it in terms that seem unworldly. The Lord Jesus, however, became of this world that we might see His majesty and glory first hand. He shed His precious blood that we might know the Lord and turn from our sins to repent. May we worship The Lord in holiness and purity. May we live like believers among unbelievers.

The temple was where the nation of Israel worshiped the Lord. Where do you worship? What's in your temple?

Henson is pastor of Oakdale Church, Brandon.



### Explore the Bible

with Rick Henson

## Beyond Belief – God is Loving • 1 John 4:7-12

Perhaps you remember Anna Bartlett Warner's book, Say and Seal. However many of us will not. In the story the main character recites a poem to a dying child with the hope it will bring comfort to the little one. In 1860, William B. Bradbury read the book, discovered the poem, set it to music and added this chorus: Jesus loves me! This I know, For the Bible tells me so. The simple words of this hymn are literally sung around the world sharing the greatest love story, the gift of salvation.

Previously we discussed that all of the attributes of God are established in the light of His holiness. God is the very embodiment of love because He is love. We can't define God's love, God defines what love is. Our lesson from 1 John 4:7-12, focuses on God's definition and empowers us to love.

God's love is perfect (vs. 12, 17, & 18). The word "perfect" comes from the verb teleo which means complete, whole. "Perfect love is the legacy that God has left to His children," writes John MacArthur, "...a love that's connected directly to salvation and sanctification, a love that is connected directly to knowing Christ and obeying Christ. Knowing Christ

grants us that love, obeying Christ allows us to enjoy the fullness of it."

The focal passage begins with a declaration of how perfect love works. "Let us love one another (repeated in verses 11 and 12)" and it is a command. Why? Because love comes from God (v. 7), revealing the source of love. His attribute is given in these words: God is love (v. 8). John R. W. Stott says, "This is the most comprehensive and sublime of all the biblical affirmations of God's being." The Disciple John takes this a step further, if anyone does

not love, then they do not know God. Ouch! "The truth is simply this," writes Ray Stedman, "and if that love is not found, the life of God is not present." The working of love shows we're in fellowship; it is evidence of our sonship, and the manifestation of the presence of God in us. And if you do not love you do not know God be-

cause God is love. No ifs, ands or buts about it!

John goes on to write, this perfect love was demonstrated (NKJV) or made manifest (ESV) among us. No greater love has ever been demonstrated than when God sent His Son to be the propitiation (atoning sacrifice) for our sins (John 3:16). "Stamped forever in human history, the greatest sign of love is a bloody cross. If you

have ever been to that cross and seen the love of God manifested there, you never can go back to a life of selfish

indulgence and quarreling behavior." There is no greater love (John 15:13).

How will the world know of this perfect love? The answer is simple. God's love must be detectable in us. God is invisible. We are visible. God chooses to display His grace and love through us. The word "ought" in verse 11 should grab our attention. It means

to owe. If God's love is residing in us we owe this love to others. The Apostle Paul wrote, "Owe no man anything, save to love one another (Romans 13:8, KJV)."

Perhaps John was remembering the words of Jesus found in John 15:1-17 as he was writing what we know as 1 John 4. "Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing" (v. 5b, ESV). How true this is! Learning to love others occurs as we learn to abide in Him. We love because He first loved us (v. 19). It is the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives who equips and empowers us to love others. "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love." Then the Father is glorified "... that your joy may be full" (vs. 9, 11).

With gratefulness, sing from your heart, "O how He loves you and me, O how He loves you and me, He gave His life, what more could He give? O how He loves you, O how He loves me, O how He loves you and me." (Kurt Kaiser, Oh How He Loves You). This is perfect love!

Leathers is a member of First Church, Madison.

### Bible Studies for Life

with Laura Leathers



## Revivals & Homecomings

► **Bethlehem Church, Yazoo County:** 125th anniversary and homecoming, June 8; service,

11 a.m., followed by lunch; Whit Holmes, pastor.

► **Coldwater Church, Phila-**

**delphia:** Homecoming, June 8; service, 10:30 a.m., followed by potluck meal; Chris Sledge, speaker; Jimmy Gregory, music.

► **Hopewell Church, South Scott County:** Revival, June

8 - 11; Sun., Sunday School, 10 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m., followed by lunch; Mon. - Wed., 6 p.m.; Andy Boles, speaker; Ed Crawley, pastor.

► **Lauren Hill Church, Ne-**

**shoba County:** Homecoming, June 8; service, 10:30 a.m., followed by potluck meal, fellowship, and singing; Jason Willis, speaker; Larry Winstead, music.

## Just for the Record



**POPLAR SPRINGS CHURCH, MENDENHALL**, recognized its high school and college graduates May 18. Shown with pastor Ted Bowlin are, back row, Dalton Morgan, Sheldon Tibbets, and Austin Odom; front row, Chelsea Parker, Leah Bowlin, and Hayden Wadlington.



**IMMANUEL CHURCH, GREENWOOD**, recognized its high school and college graduates. Shown are Stephanie McCrimmon, Terry Bailey, Payden Seefeld, Alexis Goetzinger, Hannah Leflore, Austin Brewer, and Andrew Sims.



**BIG LEVEL CHURCH, WIGGINS**, recognized its graduates from Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College and Stone High School.



**ECRU CHURCH, ECRU**, recognized its high school and college graduates May 18. Greg Lassett, pastor.



**SILVER CREEK CHURCH, MC-COMB**, recognized graduates May 25. Shown with pastor Jimmy Smith are (left) Brooklyn Lampton and (right) Jade Harrington.

**NESHOBA CHURCH, UNION**, recognized graduates Alex Smith, Terryn Bystrom, and Bailey Brunson on May 18.



**CALVARY CHURCH, COLUMBIA**, honored its graduates from kindergarten, high school, and college.



The children of **SALLIS CHURCH, SALLIS**, collected Pennies for Miss Annie for the North American missions offering. A goal of \$100 in pennies was set, but \$240 was collected.